

## **EDUCATIONAL LEAVE/TUITION ASSISTANCE**

**Effective Date: 4/12/90**

### **I. PURPOSE**

- A. To provide a uniform educational assistance and educational leave policy that promotes professional growth and development for Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families employees.
- B. To assist employees to increase their professional competence and capacity in State service.
- C. To permit an employee to pursue training which is not available through in-service training.
- D. To conform with Department policy on non-discrimination and Affirmative Action.

### **II. POLICY**

To promote continuing education opportunities for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families staff through an educational leave/tuition assistance.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Educational Leave**

- 1. Division directors may allow employees leave without loss of pay for travel time, field placement, internship, and/or classroom time.
- 2. Employees requesting leave without loss of pay shall complete the attached Application for Leave of Absence, and shall include verification that the educational facility offers the course only during normal work hours. The application should

<b>POLICY # 303</b>	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Educational Leave/Tuition Assistance	<b>PAGE 2 of 5</b>
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be submitted through the appropriate supervisory channels to the Division Director for approval. If the employee is also seeking tuition assistance, it should be forwarded along with the Application for Tuition Reimbursement. The Approved Application for Leave of Absence should then be sent to the Department's Personnel Office for approval and record keeping.

**B. Tuition Assistance**

1. If funding is available for tuition, the respective division directors and facility administrators shall provide a written announcement that specifies when and where applications can be submitted and that gives eligibility requirements.
2. Announcements shall occur at least once during each fiscal year in which tuition payments will be available and shall be prominently posted or distributed to all employees.

**C. Eligibility Requirements for Tuition Assistance**

1. Only permanent full-time and permanent part-time employees are eligible.
2. Course or program enrollment must be related to an approved field of employment within the department. The course or program must provide knowledge or skills which are not available through in-service training.
3. Activities may include high school equivalency credits and collegiate and graduate-level classes in accredited schools, colleges and universities.

<b>POLICY # 303</b>	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Educational Leave/Tuition Assistance	<b>PAGE 3 of 5</b>
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D. Tuition Assistance Application Procedures

1. Employees applying for tuition assistance must secure supporting information, such as the course title or subject area, location, class session dates, time period, registration fee and other related expenses.
2. All information must be entered on the attached Application for Tuition Reimbursement Form and submitted through supervisory channels to the division director at least 60 days prior to the beginning of the educational program or as soon as possible after the course announcement is received.
3. Each division director or his/her designee shall review and approve all applications prior to the beginning of the course of program.
4. In approving a request for tuition assistance, the division director shall specify the employee's obligations for continuing Department employment following completion of the course of study in the Application for Tuition Reimbursement, Part A, "Employee's Educational Reimbursement Agreement Contract". General guidelines for determining such obligations are as follows:
  - a. Employees will agree to continue their employment with the Department for twice the length of the training program (minimum of six (6) months).
  - b. If the employee fails to meet the performance standards of the college or institution or if the employee fails to remain in the service of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, the employee will

<b>POLICY # 303</b>	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Educational Leave/Tuition Assistance	<b>PAGE 4 of 5</b>
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agree to reimburse the State for all public moneys spent on their behalf in the approved training program.

c. These terms should be clearly specified in the director's notice of approval of the employee's request.

5. Approved applications shall be forwarded to the Center for Professional Development, which shall maintain a record of all job related educational courses taken by employees whether or not leave or tuition reimbursements were granted.

E. Reimbursement

1. Tuition costs and related fees are reimbursable. Late fees, books, parking fees, and/or transportation are not reimbursable.
2. Reimbursement will be made only after satisfactory completion of an approved course(s). Evidence of satisfactory completion and paid receipts must be submitted.
3. Reimbursement shall be limited to a maximum of 60% of total cost for tuition and related fees to ensure optimum distribution of available funds.
4. Any employee who violates the terms of the Employee's Educational Reimbursement Agreement Contract shall return the full amount of the reimbursement.

F. Criteria for Selection

1. Each division shall develop specific criteria consistent with this policy, which shall include but not be limited to the following:

<b>POLICY # 303</b>	<b>SUBJECT:</b> Educational Leave/Tuition Assistance	<b>PAGE 5 of 5</b>
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- a. Employee request
  - b. Supervisory recommendation
  - c. Staffing needs
  - d. Funding available
2. Each division shall submit an educational leave and tuition assistance plan to the Division of Management Services for approval on an annual basis by July 1 of each fiscal year. This plan shall address the amount of funding available for tuition assistance, criteria for selecting employees to participate, and procedures planned to carry out the policy.
3. Each division shall make employees aware of the plan after it has been approved.

G. Implementation

1. Any inconsistency between this policy and regulations promulgated by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) shall be resolved with respect to those Department employees subject to DPI regulations by following the appropriate DPI regulation section in lieu of the conflicting section of this policy.
2. Any remaining portion of this policy which otherwise conflicts with Federal and State laws shall be null and void.

## **M E M O R A N D U M**

**To:** DSCYF Management Leadership Team Members

**From:** Norwood J. Coleman, Training Administrator II

**Subject:** Policy #303: Educational Leave\Tuition Assistance

**Date:** October 4, 1995

Attached is a copy of the FY 1996 Tuition Assistance Policy Supplement and Plan. Noting that this year is the first in which the Department has been in a position to fund Policy #303, we have explored several methods for making funds available in the fairest and most equitable manner possible. At the same time, we have tried to keep the locus of control with the Division Directors and their supervisors because of their intimate knowledge of their division's needs. We think that these goals are approximated in the attached plan.

Submit divisional plans to me by October 16. While we recognize the limited funding available for the implementation of this plan, we would, nevertheless, like for supervisors to make sure that their staff have been informed of the availability of these funds and the procedures for applying. Chuck Watkins, my staff or I will be available to consult with you and meet with your staff to answer questions or explain the implementation plan at your requests. We would like to be sure that all of our colleagues know about the plan and take advantage of it to the extent that our limited funds will allow.

Please feel free to call me at 633-2529 if you have any questions or concerns.

NJC

cc: Chuck Watkins  
Letonda Thompson  
Al Edwards

## **DSCYF TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PLAN**

**FY 1996**

**Effective Date: October 4, 1995**

***Funding:*      \$20,000**

**Program.** Each division will receive \$5,000. Funds will be administered in accord with the priorities of each division as outlined in the division's Tuition Reimbursement Plan and in accord with the Department's Policy #303.

- Before awarding any funds under this program, each division must develop a plan that outlines the awarding of funds. These plans should include the division's priorities, the procedures required to apply for tuition assistance and the deadlines for applications. If funds are to be awarded more than once per year, deadlines and the period covered by the announcements must be noted. Plans should also announcing the amount of funds available.
- Send completed plans to Norwood Coleman, Human Resources, Center for Professional Development (CPD) for review and approval by October 16. Efforts should be made to get announcements out as quickly as possible after plans have been approved.
- Supervisors and Division Directors will approve the appropriateness of the course or training as per Policy #303 unless otherwise specified in divisional plan.
- Send copies of approved requests (signed and approved per Policy #303) to DMS Fiscal and DMS Human Resources Center for Professional Development.
- The fiscal officer for each division will keep a spread sheet on the draw down of authorized funds per division and will notify the division periodically of fund balances.
- The CPD Administrator will review each application selected for funding for compliance with the division's Tuition Reimbursement Plan and with Department Policy #303. The CPD Administrator will notify the division of compliance and non-compliance. In the event a request is out of compliance, the division will be notified in writing and asked to review, and if necessary, to rescind approval.
- Because of limited funding, maximum reimbursement grants per semester shall not exceed 60% of allowable costs or 60% of the costs for a three credit hour in-state graduate course at the University of Delaware ( $\$642 \times 60\% = \$385$ ), which ever is less.
- Eligible employees will be allowed a maximum of 2 grants per fiscal year, to the extent of funding availability.
- Divisions may add guidelines beyond those listed above.
- Staff from the Center for Professional Development are available to explain the intent and philosophy of the Tuition Reimbursement Policy. Call 633-2529, to arrange for a CPD staff member to address a staff meeting or any other assemblage of staff.
- Equity and fairness to staff and the furthering of departmental goals and objectives are key in the drafting and implementation of this plan.